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## Deviation and Rectification of Education for College Students' Ideal and Belief From the Perspective of New Media: A Case Study of "the Hongyan Spirit"

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### Abstract

The Hongyan Spirit of Chongqing is a significant part of education for college students' ideal and belief in China. Against the background of new media, this very spirit is thrown into the realistic crisis of being dispelled, entertained and forgotten. In order to strengthen the efficiency of education of college students' ideal and belief in real earnest, it is of paramount importance, based on the deep understanding of the times' implication for the Hongyan Spirit from the perspective of new media, to switch the system of communication utterance, innovate the way how dissemination vehicles integrate and explore an educational path tallied with features of new media.

**Key words:** New media; Education of college students' ideal and belief; The Hongyan Spirit

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### INTRODUCTION

Ideal and belief are the concentrated expression of world outlook, outlook on life and values. Education of college

students' ideal and belief plays a major role in helping college students grow up and become useful. When it comes to new media, it is about emerging media to provide the target audience with information service and communication propelled by digital techniques compared with the traditional media such as newspaper, magazines, broadcast and television. It also enjoys the name of "the fifth media" (Jiang, 2007). Featured by rich information resource and convenient exchange, new media have become a main channel to acquire information and an influential platform to communicate among college students for their study and life.

New media are more than tools for dissemination, they also contribute to the education of modeling thoughts and constructing ideas. Since cyberspace is something virtual, entertaining and diversified, some deviation can be noticed in current education of college students' ideal and belief in the context of new media. This paper takes the example of a major part of education of college students' ideal and belief—traditions of the Hongyan Spirit of Chongqing, China, aiming to probe into new angles, new ideas and new ways of education of college students' ideal and belief for the present era to intensify efficiency for education of college students' ideal and belief.

## 1. THE UNIQUE VALUE OF THE HONGYAN SPIRIT IN EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' IDEAL AND BELIEF

### 1.1 Implications of the Hongyan Spirit

The Hongyan Spirit was born in a special historic period at Chongqing, China. It stands for the great revolutionary spirits that the veteran revolutionaries headed by Zhou Enlai, with the lofty ideal and belief, fight for people's independence and national liberation against the

Kuomintang (KMT) in harsh and grim conditions. It mainly includes the following four aspects:

patriotism of saving the nation from disaster and ensuring its survival, the struggling spirit to defy hardships and dangers, the spirit of solidarity to work together with one accord and the spirit of dedication to be brave in sacrificing one's personal interests.

The quintessence and essence can be interpreted as "patriotism, struggle, solidarity and dedication."

## 1.2 Relations Between the Hongyan Spirit and Education of College Students' Ideal and Belief

Man's ideal comes into being due to his or her external dialectical movement of elements like cognition, emotion, will and action influenced by certain environment. As a core ideology, ideal and belief is made up of the three parts, namely, cognition of ideal and belief, emotion of ideal and belief and will of ideal and belief. As for the Hongyan Spirit, it is a fine cultural resource of historic significance unified by multiple spirits such as the spirit to pledge one's life in defense of one's country, to build up the country through thrift and hard work, to serve people and to struggle arduously. If such resource saturated with patriotism, moral sentiments, ideal and belief can be used for education of college students' ideal and belief, it is safe to say that there is more possibility strengthening college students's psychological identification with socialism values, intensifying their conviction of Marxism belief and guiding them to apply the socialism theory system of Chinese characteristics into the construction of socialism course.

## 2. ANALYSIS OF DEVIATION OF TRADITIONS OF THE HONGYAN SPIRIT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF NEW MEDIA

New media have grown to be a major channel for college students to get and share information thanks to the oceans of information and outstanding features of convenience, interaction and transcending time and space that create such effects as "timely access to internet, global connection and everlasting preservation". From the vision of new media, when college students are about to carry forward the Hongyan Spirit, this spirit is confronted with numerous challenges of being dispelled, entertained and forgotten.

### 2.1 Being Dispelled: The Hongyan Spirit Influenced by Diversified Information Value

American scholar Mark Slouka once mentioned that

In this cyberspace, there is no such thing as distinction of high or low, superiors and inferiors and races from the real world, neither the bound of social status nor the restraints of rule and regulations. Instead, everyone enjoys fair chances of expression and the right of discourse to insist in and preserve one's opinions. (Slouka, 1999)

It looks to new media that there is unprecedented convenience and vitality for the exchange and dissemination of various cultures worldwide. Due to their early advantage of economy, science and science, western countries have gained a strong "preconceived" footing in the new media environment. Chinese mainstream and traditional values are conflicted and challenged at varied degrees and here then come lost value options and chaotic values orientation among college students.

As a mainstream value orientation, the Hongyan Spirit is presented as

to lift high the banner of the national united front, the mission of fighting for the victory of Anti-Japanese Aggression and laying political foundation for the new China; the wisdom of combining firmness and flexibility and of perseverance; the quality that maintains integrity in spite of general corruption; the mind that treats people with all sincerity and unites with the majority; the mettle that deals well with adversity and one would rather die than surrender. (Zhou, 2009)

When it comes to the fault zone and estrangement of history, for most of college students nowadays, the greatness and loftiness of the Hongyan Spirit have to face the fact of being dispelled. As it can be illustrated by this case, some students hold the view that heroes in the Hongyan are nothing but useless heroes depressed by desires and their so-called perfection fails to showcase. "Some even think that the Hongyan is such a utopia that goes against humanity and contemporary ages with a group of heroes emasculated of every desire and capable of love and survival." (Liao, 2002)

### 2.2 Being Entertained: The Hongyan Spirit Influenced by Entertaining Information Value

Neil Postman, the American thinker believes that the present era is an age amusing ourselves to death,

people are getting all the more passive and selfish in the ocean of information while the truth is drown in worldly affairs that are deadly boring and trivial. Our culture is degrading into vulgar one of sensual stimulus, lusts and irregular games. Our politics, religions, news, sports, education and business are willing to the vassal of amusement quietly, without any complaint, which then causes us to become a creature that amuses ourselves to death. (Postman, 2004)

The spiritual life of college students in the context of new media shows a growing trend of being entertained. According to related research, the major purpose for present college students to contact and use the media is to gain information and recreation. The rapid development and widespread of new media technology is able to better satisfy present college students' needs for amusement.

To some extent, mass media enjoys inbuilt nature of being amusing. In the tide of turning communication amusing, the marked changes of medium are: firstly, amusement contexts are increasing in numbers; secondly, some non-amusement contexts are also becoming entertaining. (Wang, 2014)

Inevitably, the Hongyan Spirit is also faced with the same destiny of being entertained. Currently, films and

TV serials including *The Raging Fire-like Hongyan* (Lie Huo Hongyan) usually dramatize love triangle to ensure viewing rates and they even fabricate history so that the educational function of historic narration are completely substituted by pure consumption function of amusing the mass. What is more, there can be found online endless examples that raise the mischief of heroic figures. In 2011, a stage play, named the Hongyan during a modern drama festival held by Chongqing University did not see lofty heroes but accentuated negative characters with bursts of laughter, in which the revolutionary martyrs fall into the supporting roles of amusement.

### **2.3 Being Forgotten: The Hongyan Spirit Influenced by Concealed Information Form**

New media enable information to take more diversified and secret form. Such diversification is represented by diversified subjects for information dissemination. A cell phone is enough to turn you into dissemination subject with help of developed technology, which then leads into such a new fashion that “everyone can be We Media or microphone.” and this is particularly true to college students due to widespread use of new media among them. When it refers to its being concealed, it means high rate of new media terminal and supervision-free network that contribute to anonymous subjects of dissemination to new media. Unhealthy and sham information therefore spreads all over.

The diversified and concealed dissemination of new media then adds to the diversity of contents that new media disseminate, at the same time, these contents also become of more personality thanks to the full play of individual enthusiasm. Mass dissemination moves toward “Focus Media” and “Narrowcast” and what it spreads becomes “circle” and “non-mainstream”. No matter they are BBS websites at school in earlier days, micro-blogs, QQ groups, WeChat circles or momo, they are set up in circles of acquaintances or shared hobbies in virtual space. Topics of discussion in such places are usually based on personal narration as mainstream issues of significance are likely to be marginalized in the vision of new media. The Hongyan Spirit is regarded as “a unique one among Chinese revolutionary spirits, a full expression and the grand sublimation of the Chinese national spirits, and the resplendent pearl of graceful bearing in the spirit treasure-house of the Communist Party of China.” However, it is hard for this spirit to avoid being neglected in the vision of new media. All websites related to Hongyan have much fewer visitors than those like renren of entertaining quality.

## **3. RECTIFICATION WAY OF CARRYING FORWARD THE HONGYAN SPIRIT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF NEW MEDIA**

China makes it clear in its cultural policy that measure should be taken to strengthen traditional culture for

creative transformation and innovative development, that cultural spirits of going beyond time and space, transcending nations, and of everlasting glamour and of present values should be carried forward, and that contemporary innovation accomplishments of Chinese culture that inherits fine traditions on the one hand, and enhances spirits of times on the other hand, that gains a foothold in the country for one thing, and caters to the whole world for another should get due dissemination at home and abroad. The Hongyan Spirit is such a cultural spirit of everlasting glamour and of present values that transcends time and space free from nationality bounds. To meet the demanding challenges of inheriting, passing on and carrying forward this very spirit in the context of new media, efforts should be made from the ensuing aspects for settlement.

### **3.1 Re-explanation of Values: Contemporary Interpretation of Connotations of the Hongyan Spirit in View of New Media**

The sensory system owned by the object of dissemination for red culture in new ages is bound to get stamped with social reform and development of China in modern time, which means the mechanism of attention and memory is naturally to differentiate from people who lived at 1950s and 1960s, because the modern ones are fed up with preaching and dissatisfied with materials and theories. In the duplication and dissemination of red culture at this time, it is a must to respect the market law and appreciation habits of the mass. Meanwhile, it is also needed to get close to people and human nature of the shared interests for contemporary people. (He, 2012)

To carry forward the Hongyan Spirit, it means to preserve its essential value and quintessence before bringing about any creative transformation and innovative development for value re-explanation rather than simply copy and inherit. On the one hand, it is necessary to clarify the differences and similarities among the Hongyan Spirit, the Jinggangshan Spirit, the Long March Spirit and the Yan'an Spirit, on the other hand, the Hongyan Spirit should be docked on the the “Flood-fighting Spirit”, “the Spirit of Fighting Earthquakes and Providing Disaster Relief”, “the Aerospace Spirit”, “the Anti-SARS Spirit” and such that emerge in the new age of reform and opening-up and of developing socialism market economy for the group effect.

More importantly, the Hongyan culture can provide piles of vivid and affecting cases to guide modern college students to inherit and pass on the Hongyan Spirit if re-explanations are made to implement and cultivate the core values of socialism, for instance, to base on “patriotism, professional dedication, honesty and trust, amiability” Namely, the famous businesswoman Rao Guomo in Chongqing who disliked to be a wife of an official but chose to establish Sanyou Industrial society and to devote all she had to the collective farm defying hardships and dangers. As a result, the Hongyan village was able to become an office for the Eighth Route Army. Jin Yonghua,

mother of the martyr Wangpu, dedicated 2,000 Liang (a traditional unit of weight) of gold to the revolutionary cause and politely refused the organization's return. She thereafter enjoys a national reputation for "three should-to-dos and three should-not-dos". Their legendary life experiences as well as the patriotism are stirring enough to move modern college students. By explaining the value again, the Hongyan Spirit is able to keep abreast with the times and adapt itself to the new culture environment with tremendous vigor.

### 3.2 Recreation of Utterance: Transformation of Dissemination Form for the Hongyan Spirit in the Context of New Media

In the context of new media, the virtual space where college students are socializing becomes in circle and in niche with new utterance systems such as "cyberlanguage". New utterance systems are an objective existence that is irreversible and allow no underestimation. In light of new media, the timely, reciprocal and universal information dissemination sees to it that information occupied by education-givers may not necessarily overtake education-receptors and it might go the other way around. Here then comes the end of authority of discourse power from the education-givers, which declares the failure of coercive inculcation for discourse dissemination. It is important to respect the utterance path of college students.

There is a call for studying and judging appreciative orientation and viewing mentality of college students so as to create fresh discourse of feature of times, besides; students should be put first for the purpose of human care. By means of active engagement in topics, it is also inevitable to enhance persuasive influence of ideological and political education. Then guidance of distinction is designed for different individuals to promote educational efficiency, elaborate on the leading role and rebuild the authority of discourse. (Ji, 2013)

It is almost impossible to inherit, pass on or even carry forward the Hongyan Spirit until it reaches an agreement with college students' emotion and value identification and discourse identification first and foremost. The discourse identification is based on changing the bearing of coercive inculcation and choosing an equal dialogue. It is a must to arrive at common understanding and census through open and sincere communication. Otherwise, it is very likely for college students to shield everything consciously before any information is sent. Let's say, the reason why the book Loyal and Betrayal-Telling You a Real Hongyan gains such popularity is because it breaks "typical" expression restraints of the novel the Hongyan with approachable and frank discourses. Besides, it also returns to history and makes pertinent comments on the merits and demerits as well as right and wrong of historical figures in a more objective and vivid manner. As a consequence, to carry forward this spirit is more than to serve as the microphone of historical material, nevertheless, it is also required that cyberlanguage style

should be drawn on and rhetoric methods of discourse frequented by college students be adopted to create more expressions relevant to students, life and the times for the recreation of disseminating utterance.

### 3.3 Recreation of Vehicles: Integration of Dissemination Method of the Hongyan Spirit in the Context of New Media

We are in the age where new media and the traditional ones are intertwined and integrated with each other. Publicity methods also call for innovation to carry forward the Hongyan Spirit, which means the new and the old media should join hands for the recreation of publicity vehicle.

Information about new media spreads as fast as the virus does with a noticeable feature of reciprocal dissemination. That is to say, information arrives at the target audience from information senders and the target audience are likely to become new information senders through feedback so that information can redouble its effects. When it comes to the Hongyan Spirit, it is suggested to make full of the advantage of new media for its dissemination pushed by digital platforms like social networking, blog, cellphone newspaper, micro-blog, WeChat and so on. What is more, various measures popular with college students should be taken to produce three-dimensional and dynamic effects instead of being plane and still for dissemination model of multi-direction, multi-level and all-weather style. The following case can illustrate this point. The Hongyan Connection website establishes an online platform for people to offer sacrifices to their ancestors. This innovation attempts to simulate the real scene in a virtual space that breaks the limits of time and space so that it can realize all-weather and global recollection for sacrifice-offering. It henceforth offers people a convenient channel to convey their emotions. When the online exhibition of "the Hongyan Sentiment" that simulates real exhibition space is held, the target audience is able to enter freely the exhibition zone of "the Hongyan Sentiment" with the click of mouse for historical knowledge and exchanges at an interactive platform. Campus newspaper, campus broadcast, campus journals, propaganda poster at school and other traditional media at school are effective ways of inhering and carrying forward the Hongyan Spirit as ever and they can never be abandoned. At the same time, efforts should be made to try transformation, that is, campus newspaper transforms to cellphone newspaper when campus broadcasting station joins hands with network media and campus journals can upgrade into e-magazines. Besides, columns such as "Eulogy of the Hongyan Spirit", "My Understanding of the Hongyan" and "Pen Conversations of Hongyan" can be offered when text messages can come directly to college students with the help of website dissemination.

"Opinion leaders", such as QQ group leaders, group managers, superstar V and so on, can play an important



role in the new media environment because they the very information helpers, the supervision coordinators and the guiders of public opinions in new media field. Whenever they make speeches, they are sure to arouse a crowd of onlookers and discussion and their views are easy to be accepted and shared. Therefore, it is advised to select a number of college students who can tell good stories of Hongyan and voice for it. If they can be carefully nursed with improved quality and ability, they then can become online diplomats to disseminate the Hongyan Spirit, and they also may actively get the spirit widespread, strengthen their guidance on various ideas and lead the public opinions tendency to spread the positive energy as the spring wind brings about rain to benefit the world silently.

## CONCLUSION

To carry forward the Hongyan Spirit form the vision of new media is a classic case for education for college students' ideal and belief. With the networked, informative and digital construction of dissemination of the Hongyan Spirit, efforts have be made to integrate "new media" and "traditional media", to realize the "online" and "offline" interplay for the dissemination of the Hongyan Spirit characterized by the coverage for every one, intervention all the way and infiltration at every side. It therefore explores a feasible way for education of college students'

ideal and belief, shedding lights on the promotion of efficiency of education for college students' ideal and belief in new times.

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